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Docket Management Facility
US Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
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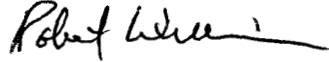
Docket Number **FAA-2003-16526: Notice No. 03-12**

Comments to Notice of Proposed Rule Making – Stage 4 Noise

I agree with the FAA initiative to implement Stage 4 noise rules. This is another example of how the FAA is continuing to be proactive in responding to complaints of aircraft noise around airports. I think great strides have been made in this area since the FAA promulgated the first aircraft noise regulation on December 1, 1969, establishing Stage 2 certification standards.

However, complaints continue to come from residents living near airports. One complaint is that aircraft noise levels may be high enough to damage hearing. A 1998 study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health concluded that exposure to noise above 85 dBA could harm hearing over time. They also noted that both the loudness level and the length of exposure must be considered in determining if the noise could be harmful. The study determined the maximum exposure time at 85 dBA to be 8 hours. For comparison, normal conversation is 60 dBA while someone shouting close to your ear is 110 dBA. Current Stage 3 noise limitations are below 85 dBA. According to this study and others, aircraft noise is below the threshold determined to be harmful.

In my opinion, the transport requirements, tourism, and economic impact of civil aviation far out way the opinion of those who find aircraft noise annoying. The Stage 4 initiative along with other noise abatement flight procedures will continue to greatly reduce noise levels at populated areas around airports.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Williams
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